

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
" DIVISION OF SUBSISTENCE HOMESTEADS

PERTINENT AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION

Agricultural production on the Subsistence homesteads has its own peculiar problems. The following information has been condensed from a number of different State and Federal Agricultural Publications. These facts are presented in summary form to be used as a source of information regarding what has been done or is recommended in the various States regarding a number of the agricultural problems which arise in planning subsistence homestead communities. Field men, members of Sponsoring Committees and others interested in setting up subsistence homesteads will find these data of value in planning their projects. The figures presented, are averages for the most part. It should be kept in mind that actual individual cases vary on each side of the average.

If a fuller statement is desired regarding any of these studies, it may be obtained by writing the respective Agricultural Experiment Stations whose addresses are given on the last page.

Bulletin 357 of the Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station reports on a study, which in addition to other purposes, was made "to determine the extent to which families, employed in other work, can advantageously supplement their income by the production, consumption and sale of produce from small tracts of land". Eighty-two part-time farmers living adjacent to Washington and Baltimore were interviewed regarding their farming activities for the calendar year 1932. The following figures summarize the results in terms of averages per farm:

Cash receipt from sales of farm produce	-- \$163.00
Cash income from outside employment	-- \$252.00
Other miscellaneous cash receipts	-- \$ 72.00
Cash farm expenses including taxes, etc.	-- \$263.00
Food produced and consumed on the farm valued at retail prices	-- \$370.00

4080
81.

Home grown food represented 50% of the total value of the food consumed by the family.

Value of fuel furnished per farm for those reporting was \$37 --- (average of all farms \$11.)

Average total investment in farm real estate, livestock, machinery and equipment --- \$4,219.00

Average size of farm 9.8 acres.

Average number of crop acres 3.4.

Sixty-five of these 82 part-time farmers kept poultry, 22 kept a cow and 16 kept hogs.

The average size of household was 5.6 persons.

In New York a study was made of the farming activities for the year ending June 1, 1932 of 267 part-time farmers in Chemung and Tompkins Counties. If a man received a large portion of his income from some occupation other than farming, regardless of the size of the acreage on which he was living, his record was included. The following figures should be considered with this fact in mind. They were taken from a mimeographed report entitled "Some Preliminary Results of A Study of Part-Time Farms in Chemung and Tompkins Counties, New York 1932."

Average per farm

Cash receipts from sales of farm produce	--- \$ 66.00
Cash income from outside employment	--- \$ 722.00
Other Miscellaneous cash receipts	--- \$ 78.00
Cash farm expenses including taxes, etc.	--- \$ 143.00
Value of fruits, vegetables and farm crops produced and consumed on the farm	--- \$ 38.00
Value of meat, milk, eggs and other livestock products produced and consumed on the farm	--- \$ 73.00
Value of wood and other miscellaneous products used on the farm	--- \$ 21.00

Home-grown food represented 23.5% of the total value of the food consumed by the family. (The range in percentage was from 0 to 75.)

The average total investment in farm real estate, livestock, machinery and equipment was

-- \$3,557.00

The average size of farm was 16.3 acres. They ranged in size from a city lot to 206 acres.

The average size of farm in 43 cases where the land was purchased and buildings built by present owner was 4.4 acres.

The average number of acres in crops on all 267 farms was 3.4.

Only 67 of these farmers kept cows, 101 of these farmers kept less than 10 chickens. The average number of hogs per farm was 0.4. (The number of farmers keeping hogs was not given.)

In Monroe County, New York, a survey was made of the workers in the city of Rochester living in rural homes in the spring of 1932, to determine the extent and rapidity of the urban-rural migration, the living conditions, and the advantages and disadvantages for the family. Those living in small rural villages as well as those living in the open country were included in the tabulations. The facts presented should be considered with this in mind. They were taken from a mimeographed report entitled, "The Rural Homes of City Workers and the Urban-Rural Migration".

The average household was composed of 4.1 members.

Nearly two-thirds of the families had less than 3 acres of land.

Approximately three-fourths of the households were cultivating vegetable gardens.

Slightly more than a third of the households kept small flocks of poultry, but less than ten percent kept cows, horses or swine.

More than two-thirds of the 270 households with from one to thirty or more acres of land were using less than half of their land for crops.

In Minnesota a study of the farming activities of 37 part-time farmers on small acreages in the vicinity of Duluth indicated the following facts relative to the year ending June 30, 1933:

Average per farm

Cash receipts from sales of farm produce	-- \$176.00
Cash income from outside employment	-- \$445.00
Other miscellaneous cash receipts	-- \$ 43.00
Cash farm expenses	-- \$212.00
Value of family living furnished by the farm (other than house rent)	-- \$254.00
Average investment in real estate, livestock, machinery and equipment	--\$3,636.00
Average size of farm 5.1 acres.	
Average number of tillable acres 3.3.	

Michigan studies of 97 full time farmers showed that for the year 1930 the farm products consumed by the family amounted to \$310 when valued at farm prices. (Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station Circular 140)

The Agricultural Extension Service of Tennessee have worked out plans for what they call a safe Farm and Home Program for Tennessee. This program emphasizes the home production of food and feed for the farm family and the farm livestock to the greatest extent possible. The essential details of their plans taken from Publication 179, October 1933 are as follows:

Home grown food needed for family of five

1/4 Acre vegetable garden --- year around.

1/4 Acre Irish potatoes --- 15 bushels.

1/4 Acre sweet potatoes --- 25 bushels.

1/2 Acre field peas for
table use --- 5 bushels.

1/4 Acre sorghum --- 20 gallons.

1 Acre corn - roasting ears, canned, meal.

100 Dozen eggs.

100 Pounds butter.

350 Gallons milk

60 Chickens.

600 Pounds of pork -- 3 pigs.

1 calf to be butchered for fresh and canned beef.

Turnips, peanuts, pop-corn, and melon patches.

Livestock needed to produce milk, butter, eggs and meat; one or two cows, 50 hens and one brood sow.

Farm grown feed for necessary livestock, including two work animals:

8 to 12 Acres of summer pasture, depending on quality.

12 Acres of corn making 240 bushels.

6 Acres clover, lespedeza or bean hay making -- 6 tons.

2 Acres grass or oat hay making -- 2 tons.

1/4 Acre Sudan grass -- hog pasture

4 1/4 Acres winter pasture.

The total land required for the suggested safe Farm and Home program is 41 to 45 acres.

The Agricultural Extension service of Texas has worked out "A Plan for Producing A Living at Home for the Farmers of Texas". The essential details of their plans taken from publication C-98, 1933 are as follows:

To produce almost 100 percent of the total food requirements for a farm family of five in Texas they state, it will take 25 acres of average Texas land, about \$200 worth of livestock, and the ordinary work stock, farm implements, fences, and buildings that most farms already possess.

Livestock required are: 2 meat hogs, 50 hens, one beef animal and 4 milk cows.

Land Utilization:

Pasture. (sudan etc.)	6 acres
Corn, grain sorghum and grain crops	12 acres
Hay and ensilage crops	4 acres

Garden (vegetable)	1/2 acre
Orchard	1/2 acre
Truck patch (potatoes, cane, field peas)	2 acres

The large number of cows makes available sufficient quantities of skim milk to meet the protein requirements of the chickens, calves and hogs.

The Agricultural Extension Service of California in a mimeographed leaflet estimates that the home production of food for a family of four, including milk, poultry and eggs, 2 pigs, a veal calf, 5 lambs, a garden, and fruit, exclusive of a charge for land use or labor would cost about \$213 a year. The retail value of the products would be approximately \$413. This gives a net saving of \$200. These estimates are based on purchasing the feed for the livestock, expenses might be reduced if considerable feed was raised.

An unpublished manuscript in the United States Department of Agriculture which deals with the problems connected with utilizing a small acreage to raise the families food supply gives the following pertinent information:

One half acre of productive land is sufficient to produce the fresh and canned garden vegetables used by a family of five throughout the entire year.

Experienced gardeners on good soil are able to produce such quantities on a smaller land area.

Sufficient green vegetables for the summer months can be produced on one-eighth of an acre in most cases.

One and one-half acres of good land is sufficient to produce all the vegetables, potatoes and small fruits for a family of five. Cash expenses in connection with such a program for agricultural production would be about as follows:

One man and team -- plowing and cultivation (10 to 20 hours)	--- \$5.00 to \$10.00
Seeds, plants and bushes (first year)	--- \$8.50 to \$22.00
Fertilizer (0 to 1000 pounds)	--- 0 to \$15.00
Small tools (first year)	--- \$20.00 to \$35.00
Insecticides	--- \$2.00 to \$4.00

Most part-time farmers find it desirable to keep chickens, usually not over 25. The yearly expense for purchased grain for 25 hens and forty young chickens would be from \$18.00 to \$50.00.

If one cow is kept, it is reasonable to estimate that with ordinary care she will furnish the milk and butter supply for a family of five for 4 months of the year. For another six months she will furnish plenty of milk for the family but the butter will have to be purchased. Both milk and butter would have to be purchased for the remaining time; i.e., from 1 to 2 months. If a cow is kept, it may be more economical to sell the surplus fluid milk to neighbors and buy butter rather than to attempt butter making.

In the northeastern and middlewestern States, one to two acres are necessary to pasture a cow. It takes two acres to raise the necessary hay and another acre to raise the feed grains. This makes a total of 4 to 5 acres necessary to grow the feed for one cow.

A man working without power equipment cannot readily produce the grain and hay necessary to feed a cow or pigs. If the grain is raised either a horse or garden tractor must be purchased or the necessary power hired. This may make it more economical to purchase the hay and grain in most areas. During the winter months in the northern States a cow will need about $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons of hay costing a total of \$30.00 to \$37.50 and 1000 to 2000 pounds of grain costing a total of \$10.00 to \$30.00.

Pigs can be purchased as weanlings in most communities for from \$3.00 to \$5.00 per head. Each pig will eat from 600 to 1000 pounds of grain in growing to a weight of 200 pounds. This grain will cost a total of \$6.00 to \$15.00.

If land can be obtained in such a location that a few acres of woods are included in the purchase, the family's wood supply can be provided with almost no additional cost.

Addresses of Agricultural Experiment Stations and
Extension Services whose publications have been quoted.

Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station,
College Park, Maryland

New York Agricultural Experiment Station,
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station,
University Farm, St. Paul, Minnesota

Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station,
East Lansing, Michigan

Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service,
Knoxville, Tennessee

Texas Agricultural Extension Service,
College Station, Texas

California Agricultural Extension Service,
Berkeley, California

